

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3680
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AMEMBASSY BONN
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMCONSUL STUTTGART
USAREUR HEIDELBERG
USAFE RAMSTEIN
USCINCEUR STUTTGART

UNCLAS DUSSELDORF 1413

MIL ADDEES FOR POLADS

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT GW
SUBJ: CLOSE COMPETITION IN KUEHN SUCCESSION

REF: DUSSELDORF 1007

1. THE CHOICE OF A PARTY CANDIDATE FOR THE SUCCESSION OF
MINISTER PRESIDENT KUEHN, WHICH WILL BE MADE AT A
SPECIAL SPD CONVENTION ON SEPTEMBER 17, PROMISES TO BE
A CLOSE RACE. DIETHER POSSER, NRW MINISTER OF FINANCE
AND JOHANNES RAU, NRW/SPD CHAIRMAN AND MINISTER OF
SCIENCE AND RESEARCH, WILL COMPETE FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE
300 DELEGATES PLUS 18 VOTING EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS.

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(BIOGRAPHIES OF BOTH CANDIDATES WILL BE SUBMITTED
BY AIRMAIL).

2. THE WESTERN WESTPHALIA DISTRICT HAS 144 DELEGATES
OF WHOM 100 REPORTEDLY SUPPORT POSSER. THE LOWER RHINE
DISTRICT HAS 74 DELEGATES OF WHOM ABOUT ONE HALF
FAVOR RAU. MIDDLE RHINE WITH 52 DELEGATES HAS ADOPTED

A MAJORITY RESOLUTION IN FAVOR OF RAU, BUT A VERY SIZEABLE MINORITY DOES NOT FEEL BOUND BY THE RESOLUTION AND WILL REPORTEDLY VOTE FOR POSSER. MOST OF THE 30 EASTERN WESTPHALIAN VOTES WILL GO TO RAU.

3. THIS WOULD INDICATE THAT POSSER WOULD HAVE A SMALL BUT SUFFICIENT MAJORITY AMONG THE 300 DELEGATES. HOWEVER, THE VOTES OF THE 18 EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS IS AS YET HIGHLY UNCERTAIN AND THEY MAY BE DECISIVE. DR. CHRISTOPH ZOEPEL, NRW MINISTER FOR FEDERAL AFFAIRS, TOLD THE PRINCIPAL OFFICER PRIVATELY THAT HE EXPECTS RAU TO BE CHOSEN, BUT ZOEPEL IS A RAU-MAN. HOWEVER, SPD LANDTAG DEPUTIES ALSO APPARENTLY FAVOR RAU, AND THEIR VIEWS MAY INFLUENCE THE AS YET UNDECIDED CONVENTION DELEGATES. IT SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISING IF THE RAU CHARISMA, WHICH THE COOL POSSER CANNOT MATCH, WILL AGAIN WORK FOR HIM AS IT DID WHEN RAU WAS CHOSEN AS NRW/SPD PARTY CHAIRMAN IN PREFERENCE TO FARTHMAN, WHO HAD BEEN GIVEN A BETTER CHANCE.

4. COMMENT: BOTH CANDIDATES ARE PRESENTING A PICTURE OF HARMONY AND MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING AND MOSTLY APPEAR TOGETHER AT PUBLIC EVENTS. THEY ONLY DIFFER IN ONE POINT: RAU BELIEVES THAT PARTY CHAIRMANSHIP AND GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP SHOULD BE IN ONE HAND, WHILE POSSER ADVOCATES A SEPARATION OF THE TWO OFFICES.DUX
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